Helpful Hints for Submitting Invoices

Invoice Problems

Listed below are some of the problems that have delayed invoice processing in the past. Careful review of invoices will help to eliminate some of the delays.

- Overspent line item. In most cases, an amendment is needed to move funds between line items.
- Incorrect calculations. Check to ensure that the correct "Expenditures to Date" amount is carried over to "Previous Expenditure" on the next invoice.
- The billing period not consistent with the schedule (quarterly/monthly) and/or the billing period does not match the reporting period. The reporting period schedule is described in Exhibit B of the Grant Agreement.
- Use of wrong invoice template. The Program Analyst (PA) provided an invoice template to the Project Director (PD) when the grant was awarded.
    - There is only one invoice template for grants.
    - There are two invoice templates for contracts. One template is used when an advance payment was allowed. The other template is used when there was no advance payment. Contracts without advance payment should not use the advance payment invoice template.
- Standard Requirements Certification Form, when required, is not submitted with invoice. The Standard Requirements Certification form is NOT required when using the grant invoice template dated 9/26/05 or later.
- Insufficient supporting documentation. Sufficient documentation (receipts, invoices, etc.) must accompany the invoice to justify all charges and matching funds. Supporting invoice documentation must be labeled with the corresponding work item number (from Exhibit A – Scope of Work).

Progress Reports

- Each work item (from Exhibit A – Scope of Work) must be listed and numbered on the Progress Report.
- The Progress Report is typically submitted with the invoice. The invoice must cover the same reporting period as the Progress Report and reflect charges only for work performed during the current reporting period.
- Reporting period must be consistent with schedule (quarterly/monthly). The reporting period is described in Exhibit B.

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- The Progress Report must include a description, for each work item invoiced, of the work completed and/or being invoiced during the current reporting period only.

  Copying the description for a specific work item from one Progress Report to the next is not acceptable. If progress has been made on a work item during the reporting period, the description must be updated specific to what was accomplished during the current reporting period only.

- If no work was accomplished on a particular work item during the current reporting period, the description for the work item should read "no activity this reporting period" and the work item cannot be invoiced.

- Only completed work items should be submitted.

- Supplemental information submitted to the Grant Manager (GM), beyond what is required in the Agreement, should not be included on the progress report.

The Regional Board determines the level of detail required in the Progress Report. Check with your GM about specific requirements for your grant Agreement.

Processing Time

There is a 45-day turnaround for processing invoices. The "clock" begins when the GM receives the invoice. If an Invoice Dispute Form is issued, the "clock" stops. The following are the number of days allotted to each party for processing the invoice:

- 45 day turnaround
  - 7 days for GM to review and sign
  - 7 days for PA to review and process
  - 14 days for DAS Accounting
  - 14 days for the State Controller's Office

Invoice Disputes

The GM must complete an Invoice Dispute Form when any of the following occurs:

- Overspent line item.

- Request of dollars from 10% retention – Dollars from the 10% retention cannot be paid until the final report has been reviewed and approved by the GM.

- Insufficient documentation to support invoice charges. Supporting documentation not labeled with work item number.

- Non-compliance with Agreement. This includes invoicing for items such as water quality monitoring before an approved QAPP has been submitted and invoicing for construction begun prior to the submission of permit(s), NEPA documentation and/or receipt of environmental clearance from the State Water Resources Control Board for CEQA required documentation.

Tracking Sheets

The PA creates a tracking sheet (EXCEL spreadsheet) for each grant. The tracking sheet is used to track grant line item dollars and match dollars. The spreadsheet tracks dollar amounts invoiced and remaining balances to ensure that the line items are not overspent.

The PA updates the tracking sheet each time an invoice is paid and e-mails a copy of the most recent tracking sheet to the GM and PD.

Communication with Program Analyst

To alleviate the problem of "phone tag," all communication with the PA should be conducted via e-mail. E-mail communication creates an auditable paper trail that details issues discussed and the resolution achieved.

The PA should be kept in the loop on all communication so that administrative insight can be provided. Copy the PA on e-mail communications between the PD and GM.

Project Completion

The final invoice cannot be paid until the GM notifies the PA, via e-mail or letter, that the final report is approved and the NRPI report has been received.

Once the PA processes the final invoice submitted by the GM, the 10% that was retained will be released in addition to the final invoice amount. At this time, any unspent funds will be disencumbered.